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GEORGE FULLER, PINX.

WM. B. CLOSSON, SC.

WINIFRED DYSART.

FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. J. MONTGOMERY SEARS, BOSTON.



# THE EXHIBITIONS.

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## VII.—NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

### FIFTY-SIXTH EXHIBITION.

(OPENED MARCH 22. CLOSES MAY 14.)



A CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

BY J. CARROLL BECKWITH. — FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

ONCE more the great annual event of the American art world—the Exhibition of the National Academy of Design—has arrived. Nearly two generations have elapsed since the first Exhibition, and of those who contributed to it the venerable Robert W. Weir is probably the only one who also participates in the present Exhibition. The period between these two events has been sufficiently long for improvement in the character of the works shown. We have not, indeed, produced any painters who have excelled Stuart in portraiture or in the matter of color, for it would be difficult to surpass him, unless one painted *Mona Lisas*; but in all other departments there was abundant opportunity for progress, especially in view of the rapid development of the country in other respects.

Progress was, indeed, soon apparent in landscape, which

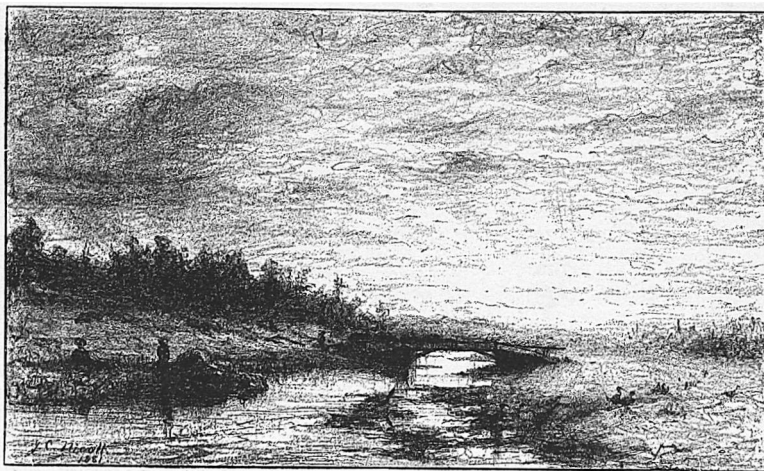
reached a high, although, it must be frankly admitted, not the highest position. The recent efforts of some of our leading landscape painters, under the stimulus of competition, are so superior in some cases to the works on which their earlier fame was established, that the American landscape school of twenty-five years ago, admirable as it was, must be assigned only a second rank. During this interval figure painting also, if we except the work of a few artists like Mount, Leutze, or Eastman Johnson (and W. H. Beard in animal genre), made no appreciable progress. The genre and historical paintings on the walls of the Academy were often so weak, that the fame obtained by their authors seems incredible to the present generation. It was the same with some of our earlier writers, who also owed their reputation to a low standard of criticism.

Thus our art proceeded for a couple of decades, and, before reaching anything like a respectable position, the so-called American school seemed on the point of expiring from a conventionalism which generally comes only after the culminating successes of a great national school. Without esteeming the late Mr. Hunt as highly as he is esteemed by some of his local devotees, we must yet candidly admit that we owe to him the stimulus to progress. He it was who first directed the attention of our students to the ateliers of Paris and Munich, and it is the breeze



AN IDYL OF THE LAKE.

BY HENRY A. LOOP, N. A. — FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.



SUNSET NEAR THE COAST.

BY J. C. NICOLL, A. N. A. — FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

they made on returning that caused the stirring up of the stagnant waters of American art.

Since the inauguration of this movement the opening of each annual exhibition has been looked forward to with unwonted eagerness. What will be its character? What new artists will make their *début*? What new eccentricities are to startle the public, and present new themes for discussion in the studios? Nor is the result disappointing. For a while to come, at least, we may look for peculiar features in each exhibition, indicating the uneasiness of progress and the healthy discontent of an age conscious of its ability to surpass former effort, and determined to strive for and to realize the ideal.

As a matter of course, it is said of this as of all previous exhibitions, especially by the artists whose works have been accepted, that it is "the best ever held in the Academy." The feeling is natural, because the impressions of the past have faded, while those of the present are vivid. But, after making due allowance for this general fact, we think we may confidently state, in spite of much adverse criticism, that the Exhibition of 1881 does undoubtedly possess merits which strongly distinguish it from its predecessors.

We find, for example, that figure and genre painting is more largely represented than ever before. Another good feature of the Exhibition is its average excellence, resulting from the higher standard forced upon the jury by the greater number and the larger size of the works offered, so that some five hundred works had to be rejected, in spite of the innovation of an additional lower line along the floor. Nor can it be denied that the committee have shown commendable catholicity in extending the hospitality of the Academy to every style and school.<sup>1</sup> The prominence achieved by the lady

<sup>1</sup> The catholicity praised by Mr. Benjamin will probably be admitted by all who have visited the Academy. But it can do no harm to state here, as a matter of fact, that probably no exhibition ever held has caused so much dissatisfaction on the score of hanging, among artists as well as laymen, as the present one. — EDITOR.



A SOUTH-SIDE LANE, LONG ISLAND.

BY CHARLES H. MILLER, N. A.—FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

artists, who make an excellent display, superior to any we have before seen there, must also be noticed. Characteristic of the feminine mind, their art is much more concerned with figure and flower painting than with landscape. Some of the best compositions in this Exhibition are by ladies.

But while we admit with satisfaction the improvement apparent in the present over past exhibitions, it must be conceded, on the other hand, that, with a few notable exceptions, the evidences of a powerful imagination, of strongly imperative inspiration, of minds stored with great thoughts, are absent quite as much as ever. And this fact makes itself felt all the more this year, because never before has greater technical skill been displayed at the Academy, so that the contrast between the method—which ought to be but the means to an end—and the thought is too often painfully apparent. It must, however, be said in extenuation, that American art in this respect shares the character of most of the art of the age. Knowledge and skill are abundant everywhere, but very rarely, whether in France, in England, or in Germany, do we discover evidences of vast minds, such as those of the masters of old, who struck notes on the great bell of time that shall ring down the ages while the world shall last, and man shall struggle with and triumph over destiny. What we want is artists who think with the seriousness of Hawthorne and Walt Whitman, who see more in humanity than a mere frame of flesh and bone, on which to hang graceful draperies, whose thoughts are not limited by *technique*, and who take an interest in affairs outside of their profession. Artists of this stamp we shall look for in vain so long as our painters and sculptors do not take a broader view of the mission of art. Art is a factor in the advance of the race; its purpose is through the material eye to interpret the great truths of life and nature; not merely to please the optic nerve, but to elevate the soul.

An artist whose works indicate an awakening perception of the seriousness of his calling is Mr. Hovenden, who from year to year gives additional evidence that he may justly claim a place in the front rank of painters, whether here or abroad. His *In Hoc Signo Vincas* represents a scene in Brittany during the Revolution, when the *chouans* were mustering to fight for the crown. A Breton peasant and his wife form the central group. The wife is fastening the badge of fealty on the bosom of her young husband. He gazes down on her with an expression combining deep love and solicitude for her with stern resolve to do his whole duty to the cause to which he is devoting his life. Never have we seen a painting by an American artist exhibiting more feeling for suffering and heroic humanity, expressed with greater artistic excellence.

Unfortunately, our people do not yet demand art that is born of deep feeling. We are optimists, and repel





THE CHALLENGE.

BY J. G. BROWN, N. A.—DRAWN BY H. P. SHARE.

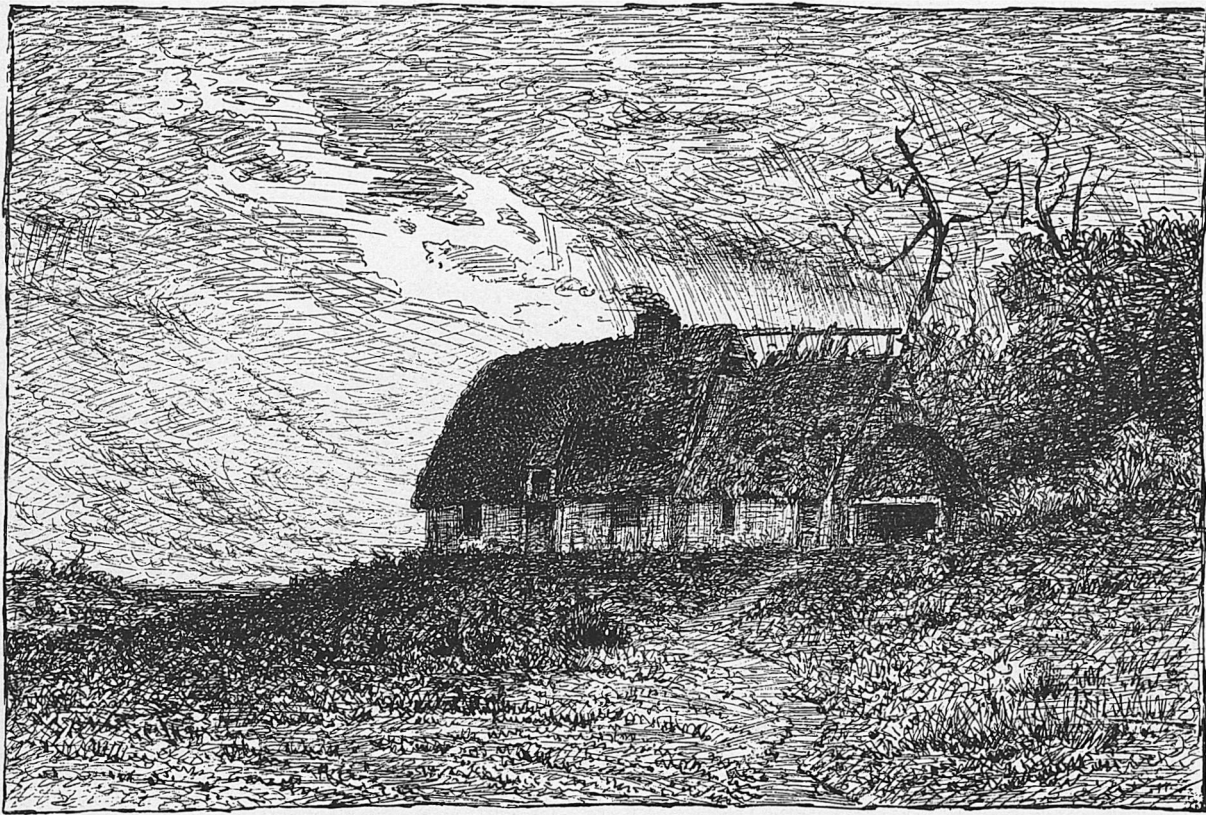


CHILDREN ROASTING APPLES.

BY J. WELLS CHAMPNEY.—FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

seriousness in art and literature. We shall know better in time. Optimism is incompatible with the perception of the greatest truths or with the highest development, whether national or individual. Even the ancient Greeks were not optimists,—their greatest poets were tragedians, their greatest artists wrought tragedies in marble, their philosophers speculated on the problem of evil and the destiny of man,—and we Americans shall never be truly great until we are willing to be serious and to admit seriousness in art.

But in spite of these limitations we are quite willing to admit that there is noble art, if not all the seriousness to be desired, to be found in the present Exhibition. The large south gallery has shown no higher average of merit since it was built. On the south side, within the space of a few feet, there are eight or ten paintings that seem to touch the high-water mark thus far reached in native art. Mr. Inness, in his *Old Roadway*, steers a middle course between the finish of his earlier style and the impressionism of his recent efforts. It is a superb piece of light and color, replete with a fine woodland sentiment. If the horse looked a little less like a sheep, no injury would have resulted to the general effect. Adjoining this picture is Mr. Loop's *Idyl of the Lake*, which we may consider his most satisfactory work. This artist is by nature a poet of a feeling akin to that of Theokritos, and it is through such compositions as this, which are the true offspring of his talent, rather than through his portraits, that we are best able to measure his powers. We look for pure fancy in his works rather than for strength, and in this respect the present composition is most winning, both to the artist and the popular observer. Mr. Wyant, in his landscape entitled *An Old Clearing*, which hangs near by, has been unusually happy in his choice of subject, for it is both artistic and pleasing. These two ideas do not necessarily go together, especially in some of the bizarre effects sought after by many of our younger artists. In the rendering of nature, Mr. Wyant has also been peculiarly happy in this picture, in which breadth and detail are marvel-



A DAY OF WIND AND RAIN ON A HEATH.

BY J. R. BREVOORT, N. A. — FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

lously combined. The triumph of the artist is all the greater, as the theme is of the simplest, — the stony bed of a woodland brook, glistening with a scanty stream, woods of recent growth which darken the left of the scene, while a burst of clear sunlight, breaking out of a June sky, warms the middle distance. On either side of this landscape hang two portraits which command attention by their excellence, and the adaptation of the style to the subject. The portrait of a lady by Mr. Porter is slightly artificial compared with its rival. But the costume and the character of the subject — a lady evidently accustomed to move in society — seem to require a treatment such as he has adopted. It is very graceful, like all of this artist's portraits, and the textures are skilfully suggested. The blooming girl, on the threshold of life and yet ignorant of its troubles, whom Mrs. Merritt has portrayed, is treated less conventionally, and could scarcely have been improved. Holding a leafy twig in her hand, and the blonde tresses and fresh complexion harmonizing with the delicate rose of her costume, she is indeed an admirable subject for one of the best portrait painters of America. Mr. F. D. Millet's *Portrait of Kate Field*, which hangs above the picture just described, is one of the most ambitious works in the Exhibition. The largeness of treatment is in its favor, the pose is agreeable and original, and the *technique* and drawing are also good. The combination of colors, however, seems less satisfactory. There is in it a little of the affectation of certain modern schools, — a too evident *ad captandum* effect to be thoroughly pleasant.

We cannot praise the works of Mr. Charles H. Miller, whose *Autumn at Valley Stream* hangs near by, without qualification. They are pitched in a key far lower than nature, and lower than is necessary to represent nature; and the black ground on which they are evidently painted sometimes gives them a tone that verges on sickly unreality. But this is not the result of ignorance or incapacity. Mr. Miller works from abundant knowledge, and with a deliberate method. He aspires to reach the tonality of the old masters, and sometimes approaches very near to it, apparently forgetting, however, that the extreme richness of their works is due to the touch of time. He seems to apply to art the forcing process by which the wine-grower in two years imparts to his vintage the effect of twenty. In each case something is lost in the process. But we are, nevertheless, quite willing to allow that the artist's works in this Exhibition are opulent in tone and color, well planned in composition, and artistically very agreeable.

Turning from Mr. Miller's excellent canvas, our attention is again arrested by a painting of very exceptional merit. We refer to Mr. Fuller's *Winifred Dysart*, and we may as well confess that it is difficult for us to approach a work by this artist with impartiality. His art has a quality which is despised by too many modern



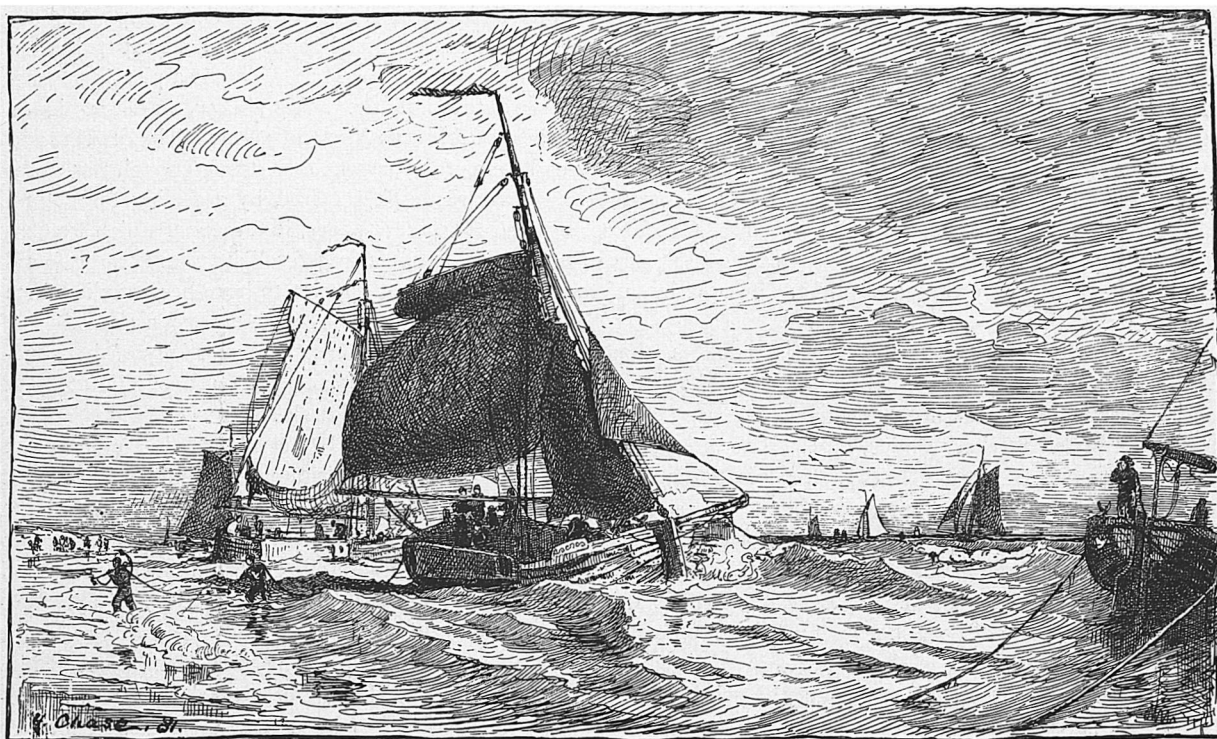
ON THE ALERT.

BY M. J. BURNS. — FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

tyros, — it is poetic. Mr. Fuller is no ordinary painter, for he is “of imagination all compact.” He enjoys the real as well as your genuine ranter about realism, but he also has the higher power of making the real minister to the ideal. Mr. Fuller is, however, in danger of losing his hold of the real, for it still remains true that, if the eagle would soar in the upper heavens, he must yet depend on his material wings to do so. In the presence of the exquisite work under consideration we cannot help feeling, in spite of the deep emotion it inspires, that the artist is making his art almost too diaphanous. But no one who has seen this picture can ever forget the tender, thoughtful expression of Winifred Dysart, nor the fading light of day on the hill-tops yonder. The works of Mr. Fuller will live, because they are the utterance of a mind that thinks deeply and finds expression in a style entirely its own. *Winifred Dysart* has been engraved for the REVIEW by Mr. Closson, and, with his admirable reproduction before the reader, it is hardly necessary to say that he has been marvellously successful in one of the most difficult tasks ever proposed to a wood-engraver.

Any exhibition containing the works so far described may justly claim to be called interesting, and yet there are many other works of merit to most of which we can allude only briefly. Mr. Vinton has an admirable portrait, which shows a decided advance in color, *technique*, and character. There is also a very good ideal work by Mrs. Odenheimer Fowler, representing Charlotte Corday on the way to assassinate Marat, with a solemn, determined air, expressed without any approach to sensationalism. Mr. Eastman Johnson has sent a painting of, for him, unusual size, with the rather blind title, *The Funding Bill — Portrait of Two Men*, and representing two gentlemen, the size of life, engaged in animated discussion. In point of treatment and as a study of character this work does not yield to the previous efforts of an artist who holds his own with remarkable power. The position of the two gentlemen is very happy, and there is little to criticise (beyond the color, in which more strength might be desirable) in a work which only falls behind some of Mr. Johnson’s inimitable genres, because the subject is less interesting. Mr. Huntington’s well-known *Portrait of Secretary Sherman*, painted for the New York Chamber of Commerce, is also in this Exhibition. *A Portrait*, by Mr. A. A. Anderson, is a very clever “harmony in blue” by a young artist who is rapidly coming into prominence; but his ability is more signally evident in the painting of *David watching his Father’s Flock*, which is good both in drawing and color. If we add that Mr. Anderson’s work is still encouraging in the promise rather than in the performance, we do so because an artist who is so young in his profession and has already achieved so much suggests the possibility of far greater things when he has enlarged his powers by a deeper experience. Miss Emmet contributes a composition, simply entitled *A Portrait*, and representing a lady seated under a palmetto, beside a metal vase. The drapery and the still-life accessories are superbly rendered, but the lady’s face is somewhat empty. We may expect great things from Miss Emmet





DUTCH TRAWLERS.

BY HARRY CHASE. — FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

when to her facility in composition and *technique* she adds the deeper qualities of experience and thought. Mr. Beckwith's art is creditably represented by his *Christian Martyr*, a composition showing the head of one who has fought a good fight and suffered for the faith. The woman's face is of a grand type, and her fate is majestically indicated in her last repose. But the drawing about the shoulders is not satisfactory, and the pallor of death on her features has been exaggerated. Mr. Beckwith's talents, however, are of that high order which suggest imagination and opulence of resource, and far better work may be expected from him ere long. *The Tobacco Field*, representing negroes hoeing, by Mr. Ward, is a piece of intense realism in execution, while yet suggesting an insight into the struggles of the laboring classes, and therefore in a measure ideal, — the method of Crabbe applied to pictorial art. But the intense green of the plants is altogether untrue; however vivid the local colors of vegetation, they are yet always modified in nature by sky reflections and atmospheric softening. We miss both of these traits in this picture.

A good piece of still-life is Mr. George H. Hall's *Bric-à-brac*. Of course, such a collection of objects bears evidence of intentional arrangement, but we can nevertheless appreciate the skill with which the whole has been rendered. The head of an Arab girl, entitled *Aïcha*, is low in tone, but rich in color, carefully modelled, and beautifully painted, like most of the works of Mr. Sartain, who is a slow worker, but achieves, perhaps for this very reason, results that give delight to every artistic nature. There is nothing slovenly in his *technique*, nor is it on the other hand thin and weak. A landscape of sand-hills at Naushon, by the same artist, is marked by similar qualities. Mr. J. W. Champney appears to unusual advantage in two charming pictures of purely native character. *The Squire's Daughter* is a type of the delicate beauty of New England, while *Children roasting Apples*, a genuine American farm-house scene, is surpassed by none of Mr. Champney's previous efforts.

Among the works of the painters who have spent most of their artistic lives abroad, we note Mr. Blashfield's ably executed *Aviary*, representing women and birds in a Roman country-house. The effect, however, is somewhat scattered, and, like most archæological pictures, its aim seems to be to instruct. A more pleasing painting is the same artist's delightful little beach scene, *Trouville*, — fresh and breezy as the blue sea where the city nymphs are sporting. Mr. F. A. Bridgman's *Waiting for Orders* represents an Eastern messenger and his steed at a gateway. Mr. Bridgman has been seldom equalled in seizing the form and action of the horse, and this picture is an excellent example of his success with such subjects. A street scene in Cairo, by Mr. Fergusson, deserves mention in this connection. These scenes, one would think, have been painted to death, and yet such is the infinite variety of their charms that every artist discovers some new attraction in them. Another picture inspired by a similar theme is Mr. Longfellow's *Evening on the Nile*, in subject as well as in treatment simplicity itself, and yet

charmingly suggestive of the delicious quietude which is so characteristic of the storied river. Quite opposite, both in subject and in treatment, is Mr. Howland's *Blue Monday*, a choice little bit of genre and landscape, showing the trials of washing-day in the country. *The Story of Paul and Virginia*, by Mr. Bellows, is a pleasing scene, representing a boy reading the famous story to a little girl, who listens intently. *The Relay*, an old-fashioned stage-coach before a country tavern, by Mr. Henry, is one of the best of this artist's recent efforts. The drawing and general effect are good, but the shadows, considering weather and time of day, are neither strong enough nor truthfully arranged. *The Farmyard Gate*, by Mr. Gerry, is an attractive rustic bit, inspired by a feeling for nature. Mr. Eakins's *May Morning in the Park* has been before alluded to in these pages, in a manner which we cannot fully approve. It seems to us a very noticeable piece of work, with more feeling for light than is to be found in some other works by the same artist. The action of the horses, however, appears to have been studied from wooden rather than from living models.

The painting of animals in action is indeed a stumbling-block for most of our painters. Many of them succeed well in representing animals in repose, although sometimes in a way that suggests the use of photographs. But such action as we see in Schreyer is rarely attempted by our artists, and then not always successfully. This is probably a matter of sheer genius, in which an artist must depend on quick and loving observation, aided by a tenacious memory. Mr. William H. Beard is perhaps the most successful of our animal painters. We do not remember his ever having painted the horse, but no one needs to be told how admirably he has represented the movements of bears, apes, rabbits, deer, and the like. *Spreading the Alarm* represents a hare giving notice to a group of startled rodents of the approach of an enemy. Mr. Beard's most important contribution, however, and the best he has exhibited since his *Dance of Silenus*, is entitled *Making Game of the Hunter*. In a woodland clearing a group of bears have captured an unfortunate hunter and his dog. Pale with terror, the victim is held in the clutches of one of the captors, while another waggish-looking fellow is pointing the fowling piece at him upside down. A third bear is strangling the yelping hound, a fourth is rifling the hunter's pouch, while two wise-looking middle-aged ursines are gravely discussing the situation. Mr. Beard has been savagely attacked for this picture, — quite unjustly. It may readily be granted that there are artists whose work is stronger in purely pictorial qualities. But the power of telling a story is none too common to be scoffed at, and, if we cannot have seriousness, it is better to have fun than insipidity. The finest animal painting in the Exhibition is, however, a foreign picture, by the great specialist, J. H. L. de Haas. It is well worth studying long and thoroughly, for such masterpieces are rare. One does not know what to admire most, — the vigorous animal life, the admirable texture, the brilliant coloring, or the artist's absolute control over his materials. Mr. Bispham's ambitious *Italian Cattle in the Vallée du Var* is hung as a companion piece to Mr. de Haas's picture. There is powerful action in the sturdy bulls that crush their way through the long grass, and powerful painting in the foreground; but the color is not quite agreeable, and the distant landscape lacks refinement. Messrs. William and James M. Hart are characteristically represented, the former by *Cattle, with Showery Day*, the latter by *On the Way Home*.

A *Cavalryman*, by Mr. Sanguinetti, is a careful and agreeable bit, emulating the style of Detaille, and Mr. Wordsworth Thompson's *Entering the Lock* is a clever association of figure and landscape. A very rich piece of color is found in Mr. Ryder's small *Landscape and Figures*, which, to our taste, is far in advance of his contributions of last year.

The genres of Mr. Hicks and Miss Gardiner, a large painting of *The Raising of Jairus' Daughter* by Mr. Frank Moss, a well painted but rather low toned marine genre by Mr. Swift, a portrait by Mr. Lay, and numerous figure pieces, would claim our attention if space permitted. Of Mr. John G. Brown's four very clever contributions, the one entitled *The Challenge* is perhaps the most popular and artistically agreeable. The sketch herewith given makes description unnecessary.

In addition to the landscapes already mentioned, we may say of Mr. T. L. Smith's *Woodland Farm*, that it vindicates his ability to treat other subjects besides moonlight and winter effects, and shows that, with all the old-time minuteness, he has yet succeeded in preserving breadth. The effect in Mr. Fowler's delightful *In the Lane*, on the other hand, is broad, almost to impressionism. *A Day of Wind and Rain on the Heath*, vigorously painted by Mr. Brevoort, *A Cottage in Picardy*, a thoroughly charming bit by Mrs. Coman, one of our best landscape painters, and *Sunset near the Coast*, by Mr. J. C. Nicoll, rank also among the important works of the Exhibition, which offers besides characteristic specimens by Messrs. McEntee, Whittredge, Bierstadt, James D. and George H. Smillie, R. Swain Gifford, R. Bruce Crane, Hamilton Hamilton, Stephen Parrish, Enneking, A. Parton, Fitch, David Johnson, Bristol, J. Appleton Brown, Robinson, and Thomas Moran. Mr. Farrer's *Sunset, Gowanus Bay*, was given to the readers of the REVIEW last month, in an etching by the painter himself.

The marine paintings are not numerous, but among them is an unusual proportion of very good compositions. Mr. Harry Chase's *Dutch Trawlers* shows abundant knowledge both of *technique* and subject, and is, indeed, so satisfactory as to leave little room for criticism. Mr. Burns's *On the Alert* (which belongs rather to marine genre) might be more agreeable in color, but as a thoroughly strong and original representation of character it is quite a remarkable work, and withal thoroughly American. Mr. M. F. H. de Haas sustains his brilliant reputation



by a charming composition, entitled *Menhaden Boats*. Mr. W. P. W. Dana's *Breakers, Channel Islands*, a strong piece of surf painting, has been mentioned in these pages before. Messrs. Sword and Senat, the well-known Philadelphians, are satisfactorily represented, the former by *The Lonely Shore*, with a grandly solemn effect, the latter by *A September Morning, Frenchman's Bay*, which shows decided improvement on previous exhibits. Mr. Quartley's *Breezy Day* reminds one of the excellent work which he is capable of doing, but seems inclined to forget of late. Mr. A. Cary Smith's *Off Cuttyhunk* is a dashing composition, carefully painted, breezy in effect, and correct in details. Mr. Davidson's *Waiting for a Pilot-Boat*, on the contrary, we cannot admire, because, although lively, it is quite inaccurate in the anatomy of the pilot-boat. A good word must finally be said for Mr. Silva's *Midsummer Twilight*, which gives evidence of successful efforts at improvement.

The Academy Catalogue still retains its severe classical plainness, disdaining to make itself attractive to the profane by illustrations. But the deficiency is in a measure supplied by the Academy Notes, published, "by special permission," by Mr. Charles M. Kurtz (in imitation of Blackburn's London Academy Notes), which supply the visitor with pictorial memoranda of most of the leading numbers of the Exhibition.

S. G. W. BENJAMIN.



THE WOODLAND FARM.

BY T. L. SMITH, A. N. A.—FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.